



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 29, 2010

CONTACT:
Kate Gilman (EPW) 202-207-8639
Sue Walitsky (Cardin) 202-224-4524

SENATE EPW COMMITTEE MEMBERS INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO REDUCE DANGEROUS LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

Washington, DC – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)**, Chair of the Water and Wildlife Subcommittee, joined with Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee to introduce a bill Tuesday that would strengthen standards to protect people from toxic lead in drinking water. Along with Senator Cardin, Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Bernard Sanders (I-VT), and Kristen Gillibrand (D-NY) also were original co-sponsors of the legislation.

Lead is a dangerous contaminant that can harm the nervous system and brain development, and is especially dangerous for pregnant women, infants and children. Currently, federal law allows plumbing fixtures that carry drinking to have as much as 8 percent lead. Under the legislation being introduced today, the standard will change so that the wetted surface of such plumbing cannot contain more than a weighted average of 0.25 percent lead.

Senator Cardin said: **"Lead continues to poison too many children in this country. Industry has developed the ability to produce safer products and states like Maryland have been in the forefront of developing the safety standards reflected in this legislation. It's time that all America's children are protected from lead in their water. I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this legislation and applaud Senator Boxer for her leadership on this issue."**

Senator Boxer said: **"The bottom line is that there is no safe level of lead – a toxic heavy metal – in our drinking water. I am pleased to join together with Senator Feinstein and Members of the EPW Committee to introduce this important legislation that will help protect our children from this dangerous contaminant. I look forward to working with my colleagues as this legislation moves forward."**

Senator Feinstein said: **"It is unthinkable that, here in the 21st century, many Americans are still drinking water that could be contaminated with heavy doses of lead and other toxic metals. This legislation is an important first step in establishing national standards to ensure that no man, woman or child is drinking water that may be tainted with dangerous levels of lead."**

Senator Sanders said: **“Vermont has already enacted a strong standard to protect our children and families from harmful lead in drinking water, and I am proud to join this legislative effort to protect families across the nation.”**

Senator Klobuchar said: **“It’s time we implement strong safety standards for the drinking water our families and children are consuming every day. Lead is a toxic, harmful contaminant that threatens public health, and it’s critical that we keep it out of our water supply.”**

Senator Gillibrand said: **“These new standards would help protect public health, especially for our children and most vulnerable populations. New York State has been a leader on implementing tough standards to protect drinking water, and these new commonsense standards will help ensure, clean and safe water nationwide.”**

In the House, Representative Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA) introduced a companion bill, H.R. 5289, “Get the Lead Out.” Rep. Eshoo’s bill was incorporated as part of H.R. 5320, the Assistance, Quality, and Affordability Act of 2010 (AQUA), which passed the House on July 29, 2010.

###